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Identifying and Comparing the Influence of Instagram on the Creativity and Design Process of Female Fashion Design Students in Saudi Arabia and in the United States

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Social media has become a fundamental part in everyday life because it helps to stay in touch with friends and family and discover new communities. Instagram is a social media application that provides a platform for communication involving photographs, pictures, and messages. Fashion design students can use social media, specifically Instagram to find new designs and to learn design processes from popular designers. According to Systrom (2013), Instagram has become a tool to inspire, educate, and connect people. Designers obtain creativity and inspiration from one or several sources: images, design environments, personal experiences, exhibitions, or previous design work (Mete, 2006).

This study was important to current fashion students and those hoping to enter the fashion industry to understand the power a communication tool like Instagram can have and understanding the connection between creative ideas and Instagram. The purpose was to identify and compare the influence Instagram has on the creativity and design process of fashion design students in Saudi Arabia and in the United States. For this study, several questions were examined: 1) Does following fashion designers on Instagram have an impact on current university female fashion design students' perception of their creativity and of their design process; 2) Is there a difference in the influence of Instagram on the perceived creativity ideas and of the design process between fashion design students in Saudi Arabia and in the United States; and 3) Does the use of social media platform give fashion design students opportunities to communicate with designers, increase their knowledge and improve creative skills.

A survey was used to assess how university female fashion design students view Instagram as having an influence on their creativity and fashion design process. A link to an online Qualtrics survey that included quantitative questions was distributed to female fashion design students in the United States and Saudi Arabia. Data was collected and analyzed using several methods. Descriptive statistics and frequency counts were run on all variables. Frequency counts (number and percent) were used to determine the overall prevalence of specific survey questions. Independent samples t-test was used to determine differences between the United States and Saudi Arabia fashion design students. In addition, factor analysis was used prior to hypothesis testing for further assessment at the latter stage of the analysis.

The sample for this study ($n=103$) included 35 female fashion design in the United States and 68 female fashion design students from Saudi Arabia. The results indicated that participants strongly believed that the social media builds bridges of communication between designers and

students, contributes to discovering creative ideas and contributes to developing design abilities by providing new ideas of fashion.

Fashion design students perceived their creativity and design process was influenced by their use of Instagram. The results from independent samples t-tests suggest there was a significant difference of the influence of Instagram on the perceived creative ideas and design process between fashion design students in Saudi Arabia and in the United States. The Saudi Arabia students perceived that the Instagram had a stronger influence on their creativity and the impact on building the bridges of communication between designers and the students. However, both United States and Saudi Arabia participants agreed that Instagram contributes to discovering creative ideas.

Participants from Saudi Arabia had a stronger agreement than United States participants that Instagram has a stronger impact on sharing images about their design projects and showcasing style and fashion design. The belief that social media can be used in identifying potential apparel problems in the design process was agreed more by participants from Saudi Arabia than the United States. In addition, Saudi Arabia participants perceived that Instagram helps seeking solutions and in developing new ideas in the design process more than United States participants.

Conclusion

This study provided evidence that using Instagram influenced fashion design students on perceived creativity and design process among fashion design students in Saudi Arabia and in the United States. Following fashion designers in Instagram increased students' knowledge about the design process and gave opportunities to communicate with designers. A relationship between Instagram and creativity can lead to increased levels of inspiration. The inclusion of social media communications between designers and fashion design students within the Instagram platform has many advantages for developing the design process and inspiring creative products.

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